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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 3  
By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend St. Mary's School for 50 years of laudable service to the people of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those exemplary institutions who, through their abiding commitment to excellence, are credits to this state; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy establishment is St. Mary's School, which has remained a pillar of educational excellence in the Oak Ridge community for fifty remarkable years; and

WHEREAS, March 19, 1950, the feast day of Saint Joseph, is a significant day for Saint Mary's Parish, as it was on this date that the construction of the school began; it was completed with ground-breaking ceremonies taking place on that day for the school and temporary church building; and

WHEREAS, prior to opening the school doors in 1950, Saint Mary's Home and School Association was formed to address such immediate concerns as cafeteria meal preparation, the installation of playground equipment, recruiting volunteers for playground monitors, health-check assistants, and arranging for buses to bring children to and from school; and

WHEREAS, on Grand Opening Day, the "modern" school was equipped with ten large classrooms, a teachers' lounge, a cafeteria, a kitchen, offices, auxiliary rooms, with controlled heating and ventilation, and fluorescent lighting; and

WHEREAS, during that time period, another concern addressed by the school's administration was the "Brown vs. Board of Education" decision which made segregation illegal. Father Francis McRedmond was St. Mary's pastor at that time and decided to integrate Saint Mary's, thus placing the school at the forefront in implementing desegregation, something that had previously been denied due to area local laws; and

WHEREAS, in the summer of 1950, construction at the school was completed, and on September 11, 1950, classes began for 200 new students under the direction of six Sisters of the Dominican Order from Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Sister Mary Francis, O.P., was the first principal at the school, which was the first private school in Oak Ridge and also the only elementary school, either public or private, to attract a city-wide attendance; and

WHEREAS, an eighth grade curriculum was added during the 1951-52 school year, and in May 1952, the school graduated its first class of nineteen boys and girls; and

WHEREAS, during the 1983-84 school year, the first kindergarten class was introduced at Saint Mary's by Sister Camille, under her reign as principal; and

WHEREAS, on September 8, 1988, the new Diocese of Knoxville was created with Saint Mary's School being one of seven elementary schools within the new diocese; and

WHEREAS, during Sister Mary George's tenure as principal, several new additions were made to the school, including before- and after-school care, science and computer labs, Spanish and French languages also were added to the school curriculum, a number of after-school clubs were introduced as extracurricular activities, and an endowment fund was established for the school; and

WHEREAS, during Sister Mary Reginald's service as principal, the school received accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Two portable classrooms were leased for much needed classroom space, and during the time, a multiple phase building project was initiated to include a new Family Life Center, six additional classrooms, a new library, and a newly renovated school building for the use and benefit of the parish and school community. The Bishop O'Connell Family Life Center was completed in the spring of 1999; and

WHEREAS, Sister Bernadette became principal at St. Mary's in the fall of 1999 just in time to witness the completion of construction in preparation for the 2000-2001 school year; and

WHEREAS, the Class of 2000 was the 48<sup>th</sup> graduating class from St. Mary's School and the first class to graduate in the new century as the 2000-2001 school year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Saint Mary's; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud the faculty and staff of St. Mary's School for their dedication to Tennessee's children and our future; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and congratulate the faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and current students of St. Mary's on the schools fifty years of meritorious service to the Oak Ridge community and to the state of Tennessee, extending our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.